

Mr. FOSTER's
SERMON,
AT THE
ORDINATION
OF HIS BROTHER,

CAMBRIDGE, Third Precinct,

NOVEMBER 18, 1784.

Mr. FOSTER'S
SERMON

AT THE

7. ORATION



OF THE BROTHER

CAMBRIDGE, 17th Decemr.

1774

3641
*Christ Jesus the LORD, under whom Ministers
serve in the Christian Church.*

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

ORDINATION

O F T H E

Rev. JOHN FOSTER,

NOVEMBER 18, 1784.

To the Pastoral Office in the Third Church
of CAMBRIDGE.

By his Brother

JOEL FOSTER, A. M.

Pastor of the Church of Christ in NEW-SALEM.

Published at the desire of the People.

*" Moses verily was faithful in all his House as a
" Servant;—But CHRIST as a Son over his own
" House. St. PAUL.*

B O S T O N :

Printed by BENJAMIN EDES & SON,

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M,DCC,LXXXV:

Christ Jesus the Lord of the Church
is in the Church

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

Rev. JOHN FOSTER

NOVEMBER 1848

To the Pastoral Office in the Third Church
of Cambridge.

By his Brother

John Foster, A. M.

Pastor of the Church of Christ in New-Salem.

Published at the desire of the People.

Printed by H. B. F. in all the House of
the Lord in the City of New-Salem.
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H O S T O N
Printed by Benjamin Lins & Son
1848
1848

A N
ORDINATION SERMON,

2d CORINTHIANS, IV. 5.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

THOUGH St. Paul called himself an *apostle of the Gentiles*, and was particularly concerned to *magnify his office* as such; yet he also retained a strong affection for the Jews, who were his *brethren and kinsmen, according to the flesh*. He laboured abundantly to bring them off from their unreasonable attachment to their law, and endeavoured to cure them of all prejudices against the christian establishment, and persuade them cordially to embrace the gospel.

To this intent, we find him, in the preceding chapter, commending the apostolic ministry, and setting off the advantages of the christian dispensation, by a comparison drawn between that and the Mosaic. The Mosaic ministration he calls a
ministration

ministration of *death* and *condemnation* ; but the gospel, a ministration of the *spirit* and of *righteousness* :—*That* he considers as a *dark* and *obscure* dispensation,—as a transient establishment which was to be *done away*, and give place to the christian institution, which was attended with a mighty advantage in regard to its glory, i. e. its plainness and perspicuity.

He acknowledges indeed, that the Jewish dispensation was in a measure glorious ; and particularly considers the *glory* which appeared in the countenance of *Moses*, their law-giver, (at his descent from mount Sinai, after he had obtained a second edition of the law) as principally design'd to dignify that dispensation, of which he was the minister. But yet he interprets the conduct of *Moses*, in *putting a veil over his face*, as an *allegory*, signifying that the glory of that ministration was greatly obscured, and the excellent ends to which it ultimately referred, much concealed under dark types and shadows ; *so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished*. He considers this *veil of Moses* as an emblem of the dark complexion of his law, and of the mystical nature of that worship which was appointed in the Jewish æconomy.

But this veil, says the apostle, *is done away in Christ* ;—in whom the whole Jewish ritual, or ceremonial establishment received its end and accomplishment, and was of course abolished. And in the greater glory whereby the gospel was ushered in, *Moses* stands confess'd, and the design of that ministration is no longer a mystery : *But*, as the apostle saith, *we all with open face behold*,

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as in a glass, the glory of the LORD, &c. Therefore, says he, seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not : But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Hereby suggesting that his preaching was plain and honest, without disguise, or any covered designs, agreeably to the nature and tenor of the gospel. So that if the gospel was hid, * or veiled, it was hid to them that were lost ; whose minds the god of this world had blinded in unbelief. It was not owing to any natural obscurity in the christian dispensation, to any want of integrity in the Apostles, or to any low craft whereby they might be supposed to have disguised the truth, or handled the word of God deceitfully : For he testifies that they had renounced the hidden things of dishonesty ; that they did not walk in craftiness, &c. but by a plain and full manifestation of the truth commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And to gain full credit to this, he subjoins the words of my text ; " For we preach
not

* The word *kakalymmenon* (hid), is from the same theme from whence *kalymma* (velamen) is derived, which is used by the apostle to express the veil of Moses. So that when he puts the case of the gospel's being hid, or veiled, he seems to allude to the darkness and obscurity of Moses' law, signified by the veil on his face : as if he had said (with a view to commend the gospel, and gain the Jews over to it) " if the gospel be hid, or appear dark and veiled, it is so only to persons whose minds are blinded, &c.

“ not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and
 “ ourselves your servant for Jesus’ sake.” i. e.
*We do not preach or proclaim ourselves [Lords]
 but [we preach] Christ Jesus Lord ; ‡ and [that
 we] ourselves [are] your servants for Jesus, sake.*
 As if the apostle had said, ‘ we ascribe the whole
 regal power and dignity to Christ ; we claim no
 part to ourselves ; nor do we set up our own
 honour and interest as the ultimate end of our
 preaching : so far from this, that we acknow-
 ledge ourselves to be but the subjects and servants
 of Christ, and not only so, but even the servants
 of the church, for his sake, or on his account. *
 By this St. Paul would remove all ground of sus-
 picion, that he might be governed by sinister
 views, or actuated from an ambitious desire of
 any temporal honor, or emolument, which might
 induce him to make use of any dishonest craft, or
bandie the word of God fraudulently. For as
 Christ Jesus was confessedly the Lord, under
 whom he served, as an Apostle ; he must of
 course be accountable to him, in what manner he
 served the Church :—He must be under the
 strongest obligations to fidelity, and to aim ho-
 nestly at the success of the Gospel, and the refor-
 mation

‡ Non enim nosipsum predicamus, sed Christum Jesum esse dominum ; nos autem servos vestros propter Jesum.

BIZA’S Translation.

* Propter Jesum—e. i. Ut hunc ipsum Jesum vobis prædicemus. Nam si lucri causa prædicassent seipsum prædicassent : sed *Corinthiis* servivissent ipsorum causa, fuissent *Anthropoparastæ*, ut. Eph. vi. 6. Verè igitur novum Christum prædicabant dominum, cujus causa non recusarent omnibus servire, etc.

BIZA in loc.

mation and happiness of mankind. So that his relation to Christ and his Church, and the obligations resulting therefrom, were quite inconsistent with such low arts, and inglorious ends !

THIS seems to be the sum of the Apostles argument thus far ;—and if we apply it to succeeding ministers of the New Testament, we shall be led to consider them in every *orderly* succession, as holding their office under the LORD, Jesus Christ, the king and law-giver of the Church ; and consequently under the strongest bonds to fidelity and integrity in his service, and to act from a governing view to please him, to promote the honour and interest of his kingdom, and the success of his religion in the world.

WHEN Christ at first gave commission to his Apostles, to preach his gospel, to spread and propagate his religion, and disciple mankind to himself ; he predicated all their power and privileges upon his own authority and prerogative ; “ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth ; go ye therefore and teach all nations,” &c.

AND Christ still holds the kingly office in the Church : the administration of affairs in this spiritual kingdom is still under his gracious direction and controul : consequently ministers, in the appointed order of succession, must be considered as holding their office, and all the honor, dignity and authority of it, under the same crown.

AND from this one consideration, we may be led to a variety of remarks useful in themselves, and not unsuitable to the *present occasion*.

THIS being the case, ministers may not set up themselves as *Lords*, nor their own honour and

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interest,

interest, separately considered, as their object. This would be a vile prostitution of the sacred rights of that office. They are bound to consult the will and pleasure of Christ in the use and exercise of every ministerial power and privilege; in preaching the word, in the administration of gospel-ordinances, and in the rule and discipline of Christ's house. Ministers considered as acting under Christ, and serving the church *for his sake*, are bound to receive law, and take all their directions from him. They are, with the Apostle, to disclaim all pretences to a *lordly* power and pre-eminence, and equally to disdain the low arts of *man-pleasing*. Our complaisance to the humours of mankind can never be blameless when inconsistent with the will of Christ, and an inviolable attachment to the rules of his religion. Ministers are not so the servants of the church, as to be obliged to do their work to suit men, and act from a governing view to gain the good-liking of their fellow-creatures. 'Tis well indeed to please our neighbour for his good to edification; so far as we can consistent with the rules of religion and rights of conscience; and, in the Apostle's sense, "to become all things to all men, that by all means we may save some." Great injury is done to religion when friendship between pastor and people is unnecessarily interrupted by his needless and churlish opposition to their passions, prejudices and preconceived notions of things. So that even out of respect to the authority and example of Christ, *who pleased not himself*, and with a view to greater usefulness in his church, ministers are bound to consult the tempers and dispositions of
their

their people, to bear the infirmities of the weak, study the art of pleasing, and take every method not inconsistent with *religious* sincerity, and the true principles of loyalty to Christ, to gain and keep their affections. And this is a task not very ungrateful to the *gentleman* of real candour, politeness and generosity of spirit; much less to the *christian*, the *minister*, who is under the influence of that wisdom from above, which is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.*

BUT there is also an extreme on this hand. There is such a pleasing of men, as is inconsistent with due respect to the authority of Christ as Lord and King. In this sense it is, that St. Paul says, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." To go across the rules of duty, to forego the sacred rights of conscience, in compliment to the humour and taste of our fellow-men, on any occasion, is a sinful compliance. And to pay such a deference to any authority that may be unlawfully claimed, or exercised by men, as is due only to the authority of Christ, (whatever high characters or dignified stations such men may hold) is absolutely inconsistent with the idea of that subjection to Christ, and devotion to his service *in the church*, which is expressed (or to be sure implied) in the words of my text. As we are *not to preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord*; so we may not acknowledge any other master or Lord but him;—As we may not ourselves be "called of men Rabbi;" so neither are we allowed, in this sense, "to call any man Father on earth." We are to retain a

liberty of searching and judging for ourselves, what is the mind of Christ, how he would have us feed his flock, and behave in his family, or church. We are not tamely to surrender our reason and judgment to others, nor receive or teach for doctrine the commandments of men. Taking our directions from the precepts and examples of Christ, and the inspired interpreters of his mind and will, we are to enjoin it on all to hold the *right of private judgment*, in matters of religious faith, and conscience, as sacred to themselves; — to “judge what we say,” to “know even of themselves what is right,” and to “search the scriptures daily whether things are so,” as represented.

In short, a minister's business is to consult the interest of truth; the honor of Christ, the order and regularity of his kingdom, and the happiness of his subjects. They serve the Church for *Jesus' sake*, and with a view to bring mankind to a loyal temper, and a behaviour conformable to the laws of his kingdom; or in other words to make them substantial christians.

THIS is agreeable to the tenor of that commission given to the apostles by Christ: “Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” — The first word, here translated *teach*, is well known to signify to *profess*, or *disciple*. It is derived from a *theme* which signifies to *learn*, because a disciple is one who learns of another that art, trade, or business, of which he is the professed teacher.

So that the directions convey'd in this commission, 'in regard to the duty of teaching, were, that the apostles should convert mankind to the christian religion, and make disciples of Christ among all nations. They were not to teach mankind what they pleased, nor set out upon any novel doctrines, or schemes of philosophy, in order to get themselves a name, as leaders of sects and parties :—They were not to entertain the world with idle speculations, however curious and pleasing to *wanton wits*; but were to teach the plain lessons of pious and godly living. Their main business was to declare the great truths and precepts of the christian doctrine;—to cure mankind of all the errors and superstitions of idolatry, and false worship; and instruct them what to believe, and how to live, in order that they might find acceptance with God.

THEY were to lead men to Christ, to a cordial reception of the gospel, and submission to the rules of the christian establishment.—To learn them the sacred art of living by faith on the Son of God;—under the influence of his religion, and the awful powers of the world to come!

IN order to make men disciples of Christ indeed, it was necessary that they should enforce the great obligations to morality, and *teach them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them* :—To deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts;—to condemn the gay pleasures of the world, and devote themselves wholly to the service and glory of God.

AND since ministers hold their office under Christ, as Lord; and are sent forth to carry into execution

execution the purposes of his grace, in the redemption, reformation, and salvation of sinners: so it greatly concerns them to be *honest* and *faithful* in their Lord's business. This is so much a consequence, that St. Paul, on this very consideration, builds an argument for his own integrity and *fidelity*, as if it were too great an absurdity to be *supposed*, that he should receive the Apostleship from Christ, and yet dare to be unfaithful, or exercise himself in any *low craft*, and handle the word of God *deceitfully*. To secure himself against such an unfavourable opinion, and satisfy the Jews of his honesty, and sincere attempts to approve himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, before whom all his actions were weighed, he says, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

FROM the same *Data* it appears highly necessary that ministers should be sincere *lovers* of Christ and religion; upright friends to his cause, and well-wishers to the souls of men.

RELIGION ⁱⁿ the hearts of ministers, has a most favourable aspect on their fidelity and serviceableness in the Church of God.—And though it be not absolutely necessary to the *being* of a minister, *as such*, yet it is his best security against errors in doctrine and life; against that carnal ease and indulgence, which are *killing* to the genius; and that general *indifference* in his work, whereby he is sure to destroy his own *dignity*, forfeit his *final reward*, and endanger the *souls* of his people.

WE should feel the weight and importance of those truths we declare to others; we should possess

self the same hopes we endeavour to inspire in their minds, and be ourselves under the influence of those motives we exhibit to their view. This will carry us with *spirit* and *alacrity* through all the weary stages of our duty ; we shall then be in earnest in praying, preaching, and studying for our people, and take pains to find out the best methods of address and application to the various classes of men.

MINISTERS are under so much the better advantages for recommending religion to their hearers ; by how much the more they themselves have discovered of its real excellencies. This advantage does not however arise from that liberty which some take to entertain their audience with a detail of their own *religious feelings*, and to make their own experience a standard to others, a rule of interpretation, and medium of proof, by which to establish their own notions in respect to any particular manner of conversion. "The wind bloweth where it listeth :"—The manner of the Spirit's operation is as various as the courses and effects of the *Atmos-fluid* ; so that the personal experience of one man proves nothing to another. And therefore such a method of preaching must be as unintelligible as the report of the wind, when we only "hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." Only some general things in conversion are analogous. And these are better *stated* in the word of God, than from the experience of *enthusiasts*, interpreted at their own discretion : but what I mean is, that he who has himself experienced the transforming light and power of Divine truth, and the influence

influence of the Holy Spirit, on his own mind, will naturally recommend religion to others with more spirit, and set it off with a better grace, by giving a *specimen*, in his own life and conversation, of the real beauty and advantage of every *personal, social, and divine virtue*.

HE will also make a more strenuous and skillful opposition to the ways of sin, by how much the more he himself is averse to it.—If he hath discovered the intrigues of Satan, and been able through grace to defeat his designs; he will be able also to make known the cheat to others, and prevent their being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin—able to strip sin of its *false dress*, and make it appear the most lively picture of deformity!

*Disguise gives sin its' attractives of a queen;
Virtue shines brightest in an artless mien.*

AGAIN, from the given observation, under which we are led to consider ministers as the *Messengers* of Christ, and serving his cause in the world, it appears natural to suppose, that while they are faithful to him, and do not forfeit their characters as his ambassadors, by any disloyal act, they may safely depend on him for all that aid, assistance and influence which they need, in the discharge of ministerial duties.—They may believingly pray for the enlightening, quickening and supporting influence of the Holy Spirit:—That God would give them a large and correct view of the Gospel method of salvation; and to this end, *assist* their studies, strengthen their memories, and succeed them in all their laudable attempts to become knowing and useful.

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THEY may not indeed expect these Divine helps in such an *immediate* and *miraculous* way, as would preclude the necessity of their own care, pains and study for the acquisition of learning and knowledge: for this would be an apparent defeat of the Divine designs in appointing the *means* of knowledge and education; and render impertinent St. Paul's addresses to *Timothy* on this head; in which he requires him to *give attendance to reading, exhortation and doctrine*;—*not to neglect the gift that was in him*;—*but meditate on these things, and give himself wholly to them, that his profiting might appear to all.*

MINISTERS who neglect their studies, do necessarily starve their own minds; and consequently cheat their people. And hence we see how much it is for the interest of a people to afford a minister, whom Christ hath *sent into their service*, a handsome support; and free them as much as may be from worldly cares and avocations. Indeed, it is but reasonable to believe, that Christ, who hath call'd ministers into his peculiar business, has made provision, by his institution, for their honorable subsistence. *No man* (as the Apostle reasons in this case) *goeth to a warfare at his own charges*:—*Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel.* It is therefore even sacrilege in a people to withhold this *living* from them. But a temporal support from a people, is not all that Christ hath provided for those employed under him, in consequence of their devotion to his *service* in the Church. Religion does not ensure great worldly possessions to any; but its chief blessings and re-
wards

wards are such, as respect the future and eternal state. From a prospect of an *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, ministers derive their principal encouragement in their master's service. If they are *faithful unto the death*, they have right to expect a crown of life,—to be advanced to seats of honor and thrones of triumph in the everlasting kingdom of their Lord. Animated by such a prospect, methinks we should be true to our trust amidst the most pressing difficulties and temptations;—courageously wade through every trial; and patiently *do* and *endure* the whole will of Christ; that we may finally give up our account with joy, and appear before our judge with the brightest marks of honour, approbation and applause!

Thus I have suggested some of the leading thoughts that occurred to my mind under the consideration of ministers holding their office under *Christ Jesus the Lord*, and being employed by him in the service of the Church.

THE observations I have made, so far as they are just, are so readily applied, that I have not the vanity to think it would be any useful improvement of the subject to attempt a further application of it, particularly addressed to my Reverend *Fathers* and *Brethren* in the ministry, here present; whose thoughts have doubtless all along *prevented* me, and comprehended the subject faster than actual utterance would permit me to proceed.

I SHALL however, take the liberty to address myself, in a few words, to him who is presently to be separated, by solemn ordination, to the work
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of the Christian ministry, whereunto we apprehend he is called.

DEAR BROTHER, 'tis at your urgent request that I take upon me this task to day, and with a principal aim to remit your thoughts to some considerations of moment and consequence to you, as you are entering into the ministerial employment,—You are soon to be enlisted into Christ's peculiar service, and commissioned as an officer under him. You are to be brought under a solemn oath of allegiance to him; and are to serve the Church hereafter *for his sake*. 'Tis therefore earnestly recommended to you, to remember who you are acting for, and acting under;—to do your work well for his sake. Take all your directions from him, and from no one else. Acknowledge no other Lord but him;—Preach no other Lord but him. Claim no lordly power or pre-eminence yourself, nor be guilty of such submission to others, as would betray a disrespect to the kingly authority of Christ.—While you scorn the distasteful airs of a *Bigot*, yet put on the stability of a Christian; and never be scolded or complimented out of the truth. Endeavour to gain the affections of all, so far as you can endeavour it innocently; but never court their good-liking at the expence of honour and conscience.

REMEMBER, it is your great business, as a minister, to make men substantially good;—to convert them to Christ and his religion;—to make them firm believers in the christian Revelation, and pious and holy, righteous and charitable livers:—To root out error and vice;—to suppress fraud

and violence, impiety and intemperance ; and teach mankind to abstract themselves, in a suitable degree, from the pleasures and gratifications of flesh and sense ;—to divorce their hearts and affections from this world, and prepare to leave it !—To rise superior to this vain scene, and calculate all their actions for eternity !

IN the discharge of this important work, you will do well to remember your accountableness to Christ, and dependance on him, as the Lord who hath sent you forth to labour in his vineyard. —You must pray that he would prosper the means of grace, and render his word and ordinances savingly beneficial : that he would grant you mercy to be faithful and successful.

OH ! consider how much it *concerns* you to be *faithful* to your trust ; how much, to have your heart engaged in your work, to be a sincere friend and lover of Christ ! Without this his service will soon become a drudgery to you, and you will faint under the difficulties and discouragements in your way. But, fired with this love and zeal for Christ, and animated with the hope of a future crown and reward, you will feel yourself obliged to the most vigorous exertions in the service of your dear Lord and Master. —You will study with pleasure to find out his will in regard to what you are to teach, and in regard to the government of his house : and will take heed to the ministry you have received of him, in all respects, to fulfil it.

WE wish you the kind influence of his spirit and grace, that you may become a faithful and wise steward in the house-hold of God, to give
to

to every one their portion of meat in due season ;
*For blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he
 cometh shall find so doing.*

I shall now add a few words by way of address
 to the church and people of God in this place.

Dearly Beloved,

WE congratulate you on the prospect you have
 of a peaceable settlement of the Gospel among you.
 You are doubtless sensible how great the work of
 a Minister is ; how solemn the charge he re-
 ceives !—Being accountable to Christ, he must be
 faithful : therefore blame not your minister for
 declaring the whole counsel of God. He must
 tell those, who are resolved in sin and impenitence,
 that they shall *surely die*. But give the highest
 encouragement to those, who will break off their
 sins by righteousness, and *frame their doings to
 turn unto the Lord*.—See that he does not stand
 alone in the defence of truth ; but use your own
 influence for the spread of religion, especially in
 your respective families. When children and do-
 mestic hear, or see, nothing of a religious nature,
 more than one day in seven, it leaves an advantage
 of *six to one* in the hands of Satan, and to the in-
 fluence of evil examples.

BE with your minister to comfort him under
 every gloom that may at any time be upon his
 spirit. And while he sows to you spiritual things,
 think it not much if he shall reap some of your
 carnal things. Receive him as one sent into your
 service by Christ, the great Shepherd and Bishop
 of souls ; esteem him highly in love for his works
 sake ; be tender of his character and reputation ;
moderate his outward cares, and let him ever find
you

you a willing and obedient, a liberal and holy people.

MAY nothing be wanting on your part, to make his ministry effectual among you : and then, if he is faithful (as we pray God he may be) what a glorious influence will this day's solemnity have on the present peace and edification, the future glory and blessedness of this flock of God.

MAY you and your minister long be mutual comforts and blessings in this world, and reciprocal enhancements of each other's crown of glory in the great day of the Lord.

To conclude in a word.—As the ministry was designed to promote *christianity*, and make men real disciples of Christ, by bringing them to a temper of mind, and manner of life, conformable to the rules of his religion ; let all who hear me this day, be led duly to prize their respective Ministers, and endeavour to forward the design of their mission. Especially let each one for himself, make it his care to be personally benefited by their labours ; be concern'd to become religious, and speedily to comply with the great and benevolent design of the Gospel.

You are all, at least, in a natural capacity to *attend on the means of grace*, and may hereby contribute something towards subduing vicious inclinations, and acquiring settled habits of piety and virtue :—'Tis therefore your wisdom, in this way to seek for the grace of life ; since you cannot doubt but that the honour of God is concerned for the success of those means which his wisdom and grace have appointed.—However any may fancy to themselves that they can live
more

more easy and pleasant in this world for casting off all religious restraints ; yet the hour is coming when they will want the comforts and the rewards of Religion.—The things of this world will soon fail—its form and fashion pass away, and all this lower scene darken to our view !—In this awful, important hour, religion only can open to us those glorious and animating prospects beyond the curtain of time, which will be sufficient for our support. May this thought endear religion to us in all its branches, till we are wrought up to a resemblance of the Divine purity, and made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light ; and may the Holy Spirit concur to make this discourse conducive to such a blessed purpose. And the glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

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